

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 9-12 and 14-19 are pending in the application, with claims 9 and 14 being independent. Claims 1-8, 13, and 20 are canceled herein without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 9 and 14 are amended. No new matter has been added.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Initially, Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 13 and 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 9 and 14 are amended herein to include the features of allowable claims 13 and 20, respectively. Accordingly, claims 9 and 14 and the claims depending therefrom are in condition for allowance.

ART REJECTIONS

Claims 1-7, 9-12, and 14-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,944,133 B2 (Wisner et al.). Claims 8 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Wisner et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,820,173 B1 (Bittel et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1-8, 13, and 20 are canceled without prejudice, thereby rendering the rejection of those claims moot. Also, claims 9 and 14 have been amended to include features of allowable claims 13 and 20, respectively. Accordingly, claims 9 and 14 are in condition for allowance.

Dependent claims 10-12 and 15-19 depend from one of independent claims 9 and 14 and are, therefore, allowable by virtue of this dependency, as well as for the additional features that each recites.

CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 9-12 and 14-19 are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections and an early notice of allowance.

If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent allowance of this case, **the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issue.**

Respectfully submitted,

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